

IN THE CLAIMS:

Kindly replace the claims of record with the following full set of claims:

1. (Currently amended) A multiple access communication system comprising at least one primary station and a plurality of secondary stations the primary station and the secondary stations being interconnected via a network, the secondary stations being arranged for transmitting, to the primary station, return signals in a return signal frequency band dedicated for transmission to the primary station, the secondary stations being further arranged for transmitting the return signals in ~~only~~ a first part of the return signal frequency band containing relatively little noise, wherein the network comprises:
means for mapping a first set of the return signals of the plurality of secondary stations onto ~~[[a]]~~ the first portion of the return signal frequency band and
means for mapping a second set of said first set of return signals ~~of the plurality of secondary stations~~ onto a ~~second portion of~~ the return signal frequency band.
2. (Previously presented) A multiple access communication system according to Claim 1 wherein the means for mapping the return signals are located in a part of the network where relatively little noise occurs.
3. (Previously presented) A multiple access communication system according to Claim 1, wherein the part of the return signal frequency band is an upper part of the return channel band, the means for mapping the return signals comprising a down converter for down converting the frequency of at least one of the return signals.
4. (Previously presented) A multiple access communication system according to Claim 3, wherein the down converter comprises a block down converter.
5. (Previously presented) A multiple access communication system according to Claim 1, wherein the network comprises a coaxial cable network.

6. (Previously presented) A multiple access communication system according to Claim 1, wherein the network comprises a hybrid fiber/coax network.